

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Pippi Longstocking

by

Astrid Lindgren

Book Information

Astrid Lindgren, Pippi Longstocking

Quiz Number: 69

Viking, 1997

ISBN 0-670-55745-5; LCCN

160 Pages

Book Level: 5.2

Interest Level: MG

A lucky little girl who lives with a horse and a monkey--but without any parents--at the edge of a Swedish village is involved in many escapades.

Award: ABA Children's Book Council; SLJ Best Book

Topics: Animals, Horses; Animals, Monkeys; Family Life, Orphans; Humor/Funny, Funny; Series, Pippi

Main Characters

Annika Settergren Tommy's sister, a girl who lives next door to Pippi and becomes her friend

Mr. Nilsson Pippi's pet monkey, who was a gift from her father

Mrs. Settergren Tommy and Annika's mother

Pippi Longstocking the main character of the story; a nine-year-old child with amazing strength who lives alone in a small village

Tommy Settergren Annika's brother, a boy who lives next door to Pippi and becomes her friend

Vocabulary

booty goods taken or stolen from another

cannibal a human who eats other people

ibex a wild goat

ringmaster the person in charge of a circus performance

Synopsis

Tommy and Annika Settergren are two very polite siblings who play nicely together but often wish for another playmate to bring excitement into their lives. One day their wish comes true beyond their wildest fancies as the abandoned estate across the fence

from them is inhabited by nine-year-old Pippi Longstocking, a monkey named Mr. Nilsson, and a horse that lives on the porch. Pippi does not remember her mother, but her father had managed to collect a fortune in gold coins before he was lost at sea. Pippi has inherited her father's home and wealth and optimistically awaits his return.

Pippi fascinates Tommy and Annika with her wild stories, worldly knowledge, and superhuman strength. Pippi teaches Tommy and Annika how to be a "Thing-Finder" and search for treasure. She also protects a small boy from a crowd of bullies and embarrasses the police officers who attempt to force her to go to an orphanage. The townspeople soon learn that Pippi is special and, to avoid further difficulties, agree to let Pippi live by herself in her father's house.

When it is time for Tommy and Annika to attend school, Pippi decides to join them. However, Pippi is not used to the discipline and rules necessary for classroom learning, and she becomes frustrated and disruptive. Pippi decides she no longer wishes to attend school and finds other activities to occupy her days.

Pippi's amazing strength is often tested throughout the story. One day, while picnicking in a pasture, Pippi loses Mr. Nilsson. While searching for the monkey, Tommy comes across an angry bull. Before the bull can harm her friend, Pippi grabs it by the tail and breaks off its horns. She then rides the bull until it is exhausted. Later, Tommy and Annika bring Pippi to the circus, where she upstages the angry ringmaster and wows the crowd with her amazing talents. She even beats the strongest man in the world in a wrestling match, proving to the crowd that she is the strongest girl in the world.

Pippi has the same carefree exuberance around adults as she does around children. This sometimes works in her favor, but sometimes gets her into trouble. One night two burglars pass by and see Pippi counting her gold coins. Thinking she is easy prey, they attempt to rob her but she is too much for them and ties them up. She then offers to release

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Pippi Longstocking

by

Astrid Lindgren

them on the condition that they dance the schottische with her, and several hours later she sends them away with one gold coin apiece. Another day Tommy and Annika's mother invite Pippi to a coffee party and Pippi is expected to mind her manners and mingle with the other proper and respectable guests. Unfortunately, Pippi does not fit in and makes a nuisance of herself by stuffing her face with the cream pie and interrupting the conversation with outlandish stories. Pippi is genuinely regretful as she leaves the party early.

Pippi more than redeems her reputation, though, when she courageously rescues two little boys from a fire in the tallest building in town. Pippi assists the baffled fire department by sending Mr. Nilsson up a tall tree next to the building with a rope and then climbing up the rope herself while carrying a long board. She places the board across the top of the tree and a window in the building and helps the frightened children climb across to safety. The story ends on Pippi's birthday, which she celebrates by bringing Tommy and Annika on a ghost hunt through her attic and by shooting off two pistols in her house. Tommy and Annika give Pippi a music box for her birthday present, and they are happy that Pippi has entered their lives.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

When Pippi gives each of the burglars a gold piece, she says, "These you have honestly earned." What does she mean?

At first, the burglars want to steal Pippi's money. Pippi knows this is wrong, but she also sees that they need money. Since she really wants somebody to dance with anyway, she makes the burglars entertain her until they are exhausted and then gives them a gold coin as payment for their company. In Pippi's opinion, the burglars have worked for their money and therefore deserve what she gives them.

Literary Analysis

Do you think Pippi is a kind person, or is she mean for causing trouble?

Pippi often shows her kind and generous personality. When Tommy and Annika give her a birthday present, Pippi gives each of them presents as well. She prepares meals and a picnic for them as well as inviting the children into her home and sharing whatever she has. She shows her kindness by forgiving the men who try to rob her and by sending them away with food and money. Pippi often acts irresponsibly and her playful personality causes trouble for the police, circus performers, school teacher, and Mrs. Settergren, but she never intends to cause trouble or to hurt people's feelings.

Inferential Comprehension

Pippi often lies and tells tall tales. Why does she do this?

Pippi probably lies for the attention it brings her. In spite of her confidence, she is an orphaned girl who is likely very lonely. She is constantly showing off in order to impress people, and she probably hopes that her stories will make people like her. She is also a very imaginative and playful person, and her lies serve more as entertainment than deceit.

Constructing Meaning

Pippi sometimes gives excuses for her behavior. What excuses does she most often use? Do you think her excuses are appropriate for explaining her behavior?

When Pippi is misbehaving or annoying people, she sometimes blames her behavior on her mother being "an angel" and her father being "a cannibal king." She may be justified in saying that she cannot depend on her parents to teach her the proper way to behave in society. Her stubborn independence, however, would probably remain even if she did have a parent to guide her, and she would likely still find ways to get into trouble.

Teachable Skills

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Pippi Longstocking

by

Astrid Lindgren

Recognizing Setting This story takes place in Sweden. There are some Swedish expressions and customs mentioned in this novel. For instance, Pippi dances the schottische and bakes pepparkakor. Annika, Pippi, and Settergren are also Swedish names. Have students familiarize themselves with Sweden by using other books, an encyclopedia, the Internet, a movie, or a guest speaker. You can use these resources to teach the students about the Swedish customs, language, food, history, and people.

which two characters are the most different.

Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors In the last chapter of this book, Pippi celebrates her birthday with her friends. She retrieves pistols from the attic and offers them to Annika and Tommy. Pippi actually takes two pistols and shoots them at the same time. Though this is presented in a humorous manner, this is an extremely dangerous situation for unsupervised children. Children should never have access to loaded guns. Have the class talk about the difference between reality and fantasy. Look at some of the amazing feats that Pippi accomplishes, such as wrestling a bull and shooting the guns in the house, and discuss some possible consequences of trying these activities in real life.

Understanding the Author's Craft In this book, Pippi has two good animal friends who live with her. One is a horse, and the other is a monkey named Mr. Nilsson. Have students write a creative scene in which they present the story from the animals' point of view. What do the horse and Mr. Nilsson think of Pippi? Does the horse like living on the front porch? Does Mr. Nilsson like sleeping in a doll's bed? Students can even make their own adventure involving the animal characters.

Comparing and Contrasting Have the students compare and contrast Pippi Longstocking, Annika Settergren, and Tommy Settergren. They can work individually or in small groups to brainstorm as many similarities and differences as they can think of among these three characters. Show the students how to make a chart to organize their observations, and then ask them to conclude which two characters are the most alike and